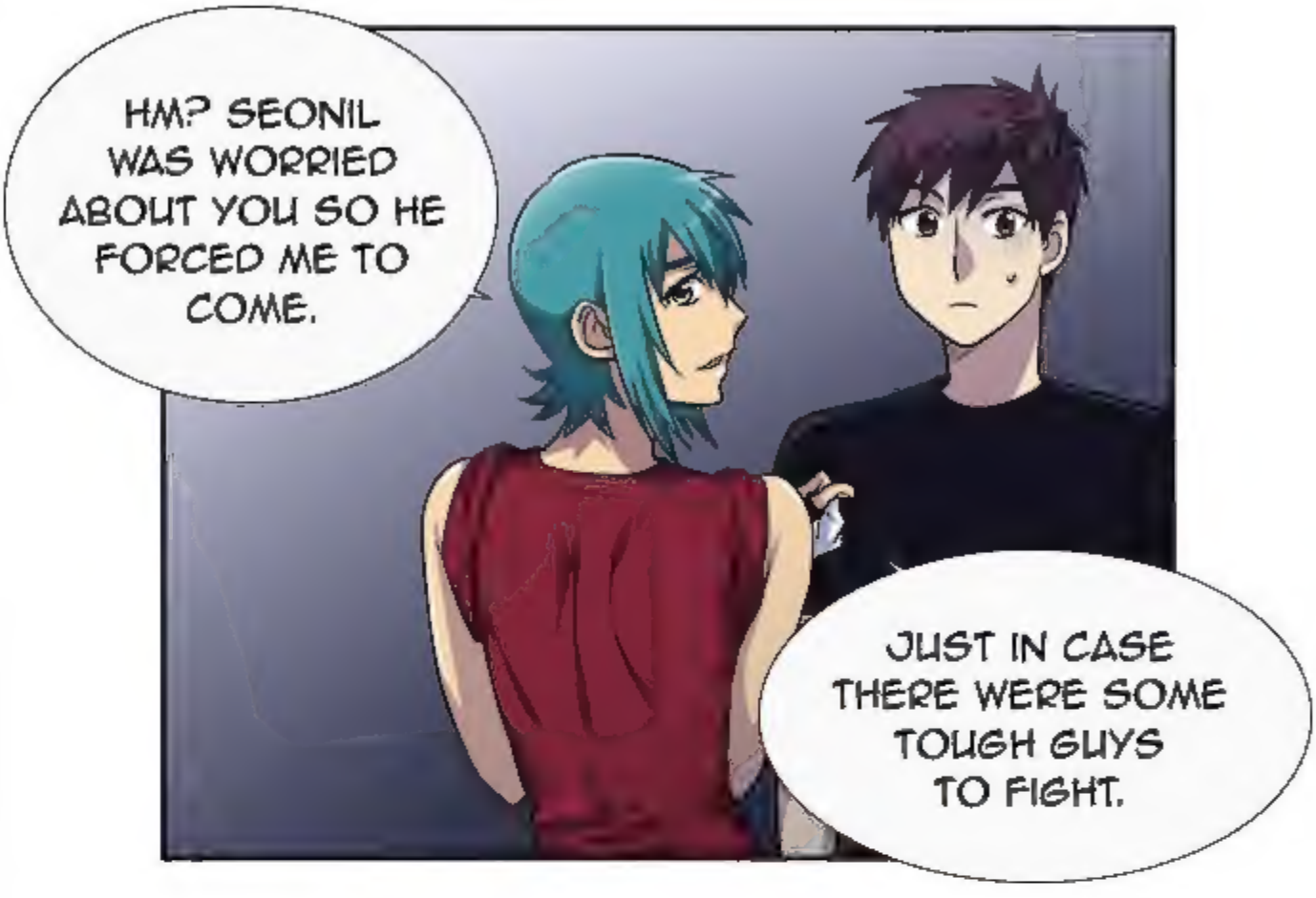
THE GAMER

STORY BY SANGYOUNG SEONG
ILLUST BY SANG-A

< JOIN A GUILD FOR EXTRA BENEFITS! >


HM? SEONIL WAS WORRIED ABOUT YOU SO HE FORCED ME TO COME.
JUST IN CASE THERE WERE SOME TOUGH GUYS TO FIGHT.

T-THANKS.
BOW

NO PROBLEM.

BY THE WAY... I THINK YOU'RE IN TROUBLE.
WHISPER
WHISPER
Y-YEAH...

ANYWAY... I'LL GO CLEAR THINGS UP HERE.

STOMP
JUMP

DON'T YOU HAVE ANYTHING TO SAY?
S-SORRY. I'VE DONE A TERRIBLE THING....

SO YOU ALREADY KNOW WHAT YOU'VE DONE WRONG, HUH?

OTHERWISE, YOU BASTARD CAN'T BE HUMAN, CAN YOU?

OF COURSE I KNOW. I DIVED HEADFIRST INTO WHAT YOU WERE TRYING TO KEEP ME AWAY FROM. HAHAHA....

MAN, I WISH I COULD JUST TIE YOU UP SOMEWHERE...

JUMP

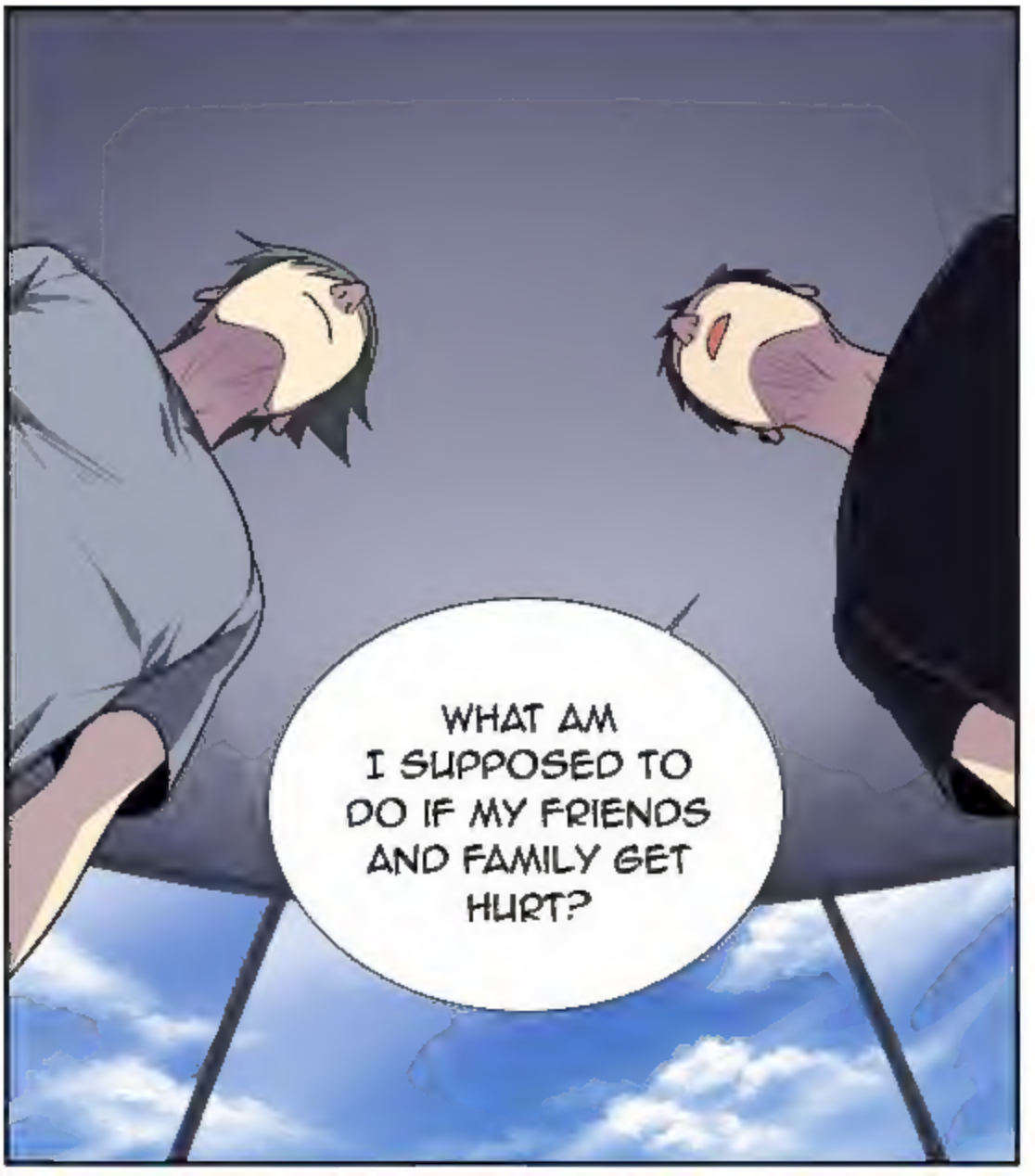
T-TIE ME UP?

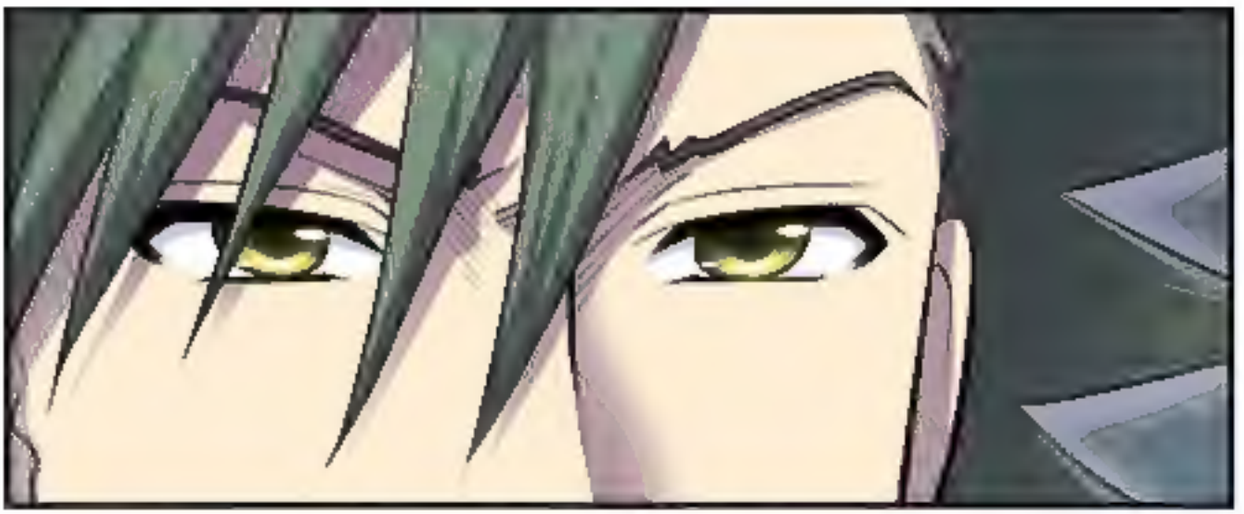
YOU DON'T GIVE A CRAP ABOUT HOW WORRIED I AM!
DO YOU HAVE ANY IDEA HOW DANGEROUS THE WORLD IS NOWADAYS BECAUSE OF THAT GREAT LABYRINTH OR WHATEVER?
Y-YOU'RE BEING KIND OF HARSH.
SO?
A-AH, IT'S OKAY. GO ON.

UGH.
I RUSHED OVER HERE TO SAVE PREZ....
BUT HOW SHOULD I CALM SEONIL DOWN? THIS IS SERIOUS....

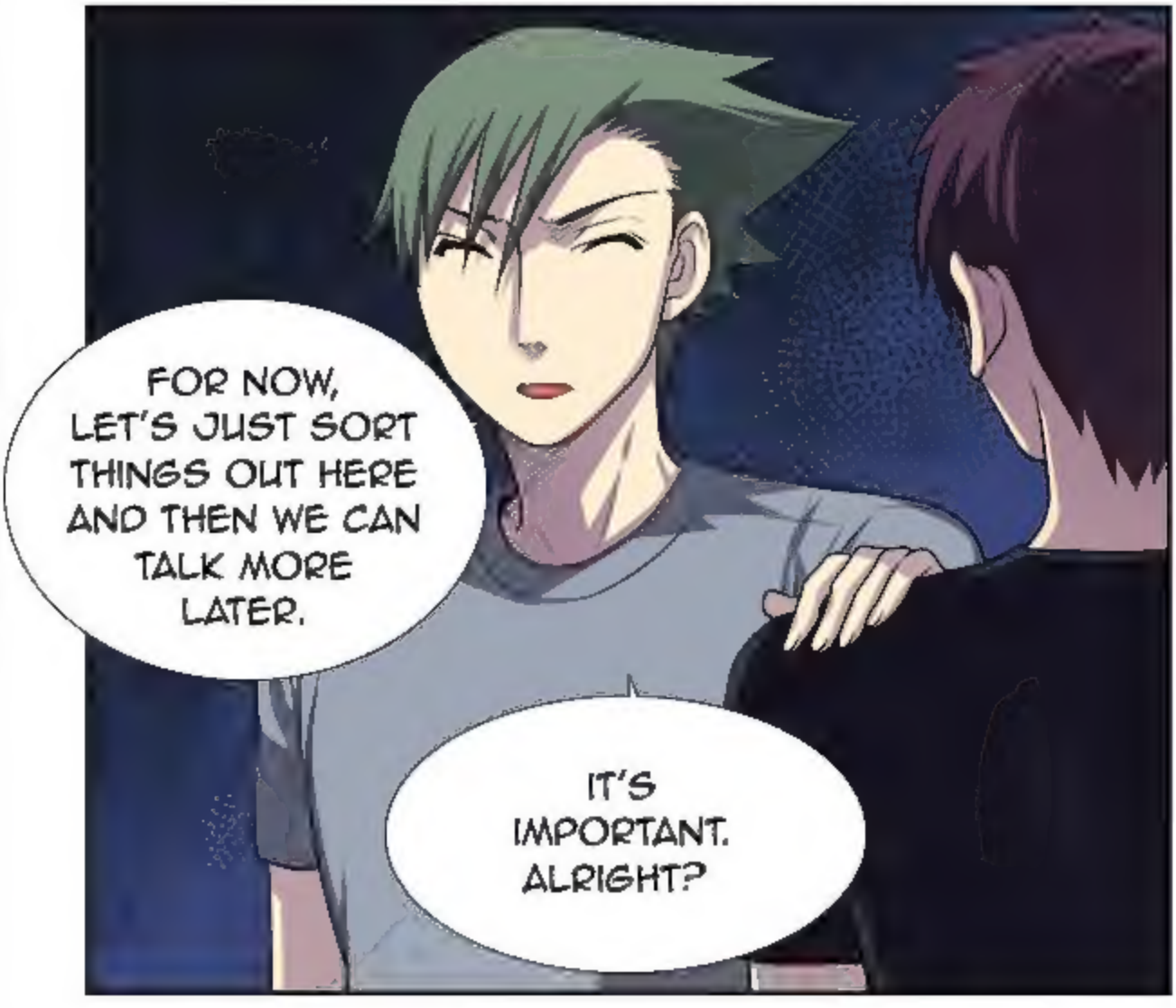
I'M GOING TO ASK YOU A SERIOUS QUESTION.
ARE YOU GOING TO KEEP GETTING INVOLVED WITH THE ABYSS?

IT DEPENDS.
WHY?

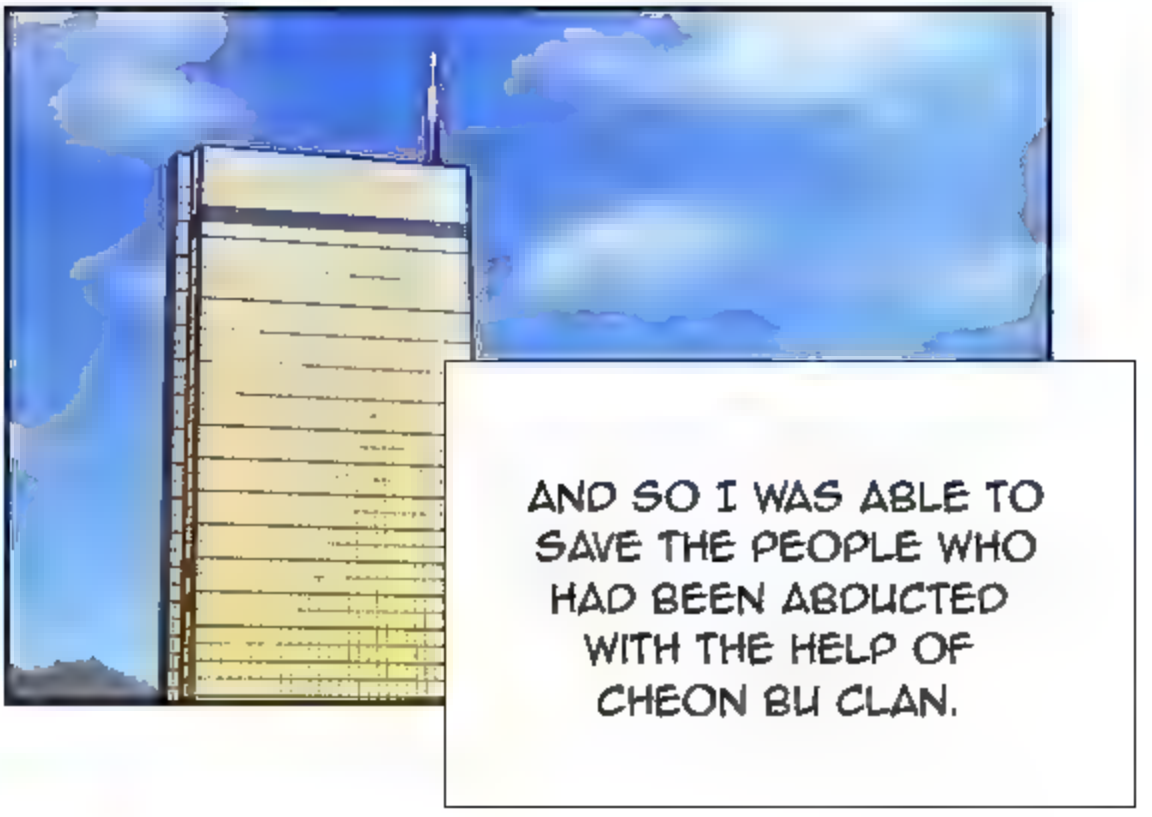

WHAT AM I SUPPOSED TO DO IF MY FRIENDS AND FAMILY GET HURT?



WHEW...
I GUESS THERE'S NOT MUCH I CAN DO IF THAT'S HOW YOU THINK.


FOR NOW, LET'S JUST SORT THINGS OUT HERE AND THEN WE CAN TALK MORE LATER.
IT'S IMPORTANT. ALRIGHT?

OKAY.

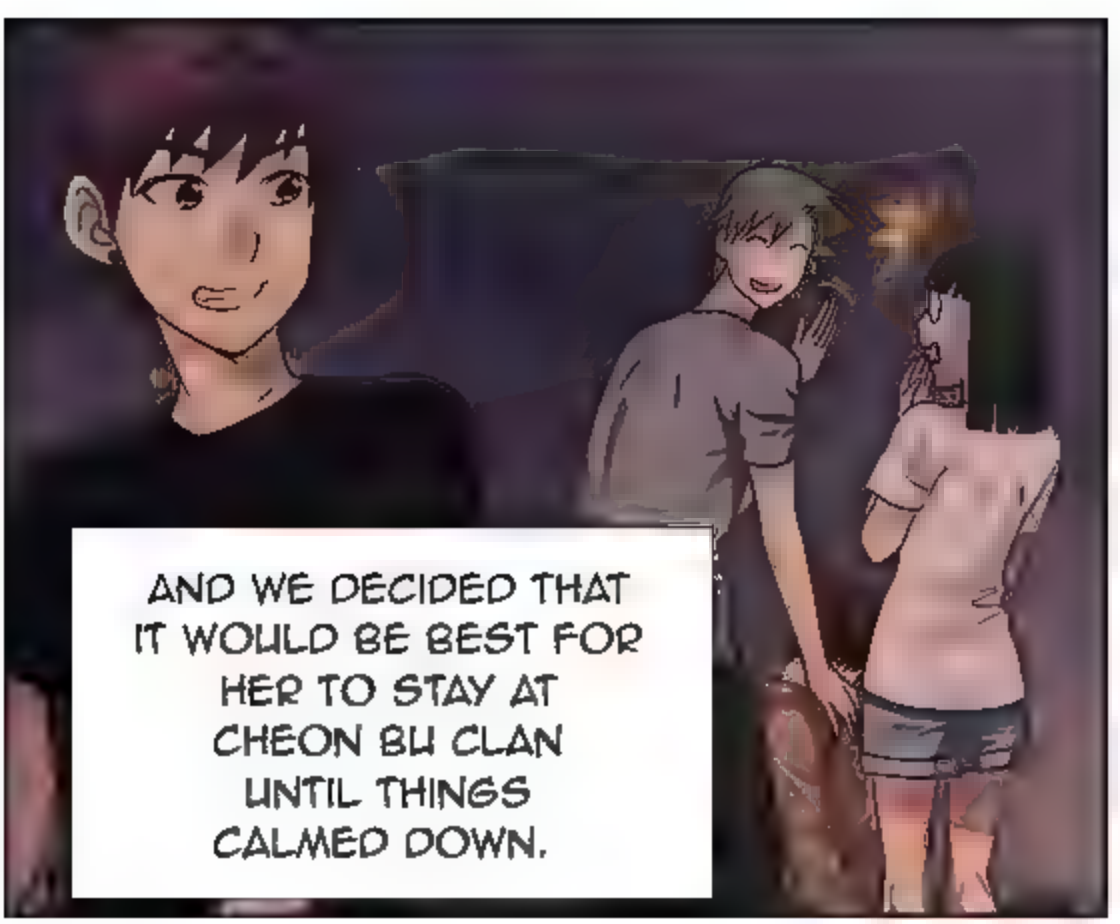

AND SO I WAS ABLE TO SAVE THE PEOPLE WHO HAD BEEN ABDUCTED WITH THE HELP OF CHEON BU CLAN.

THE GAMER

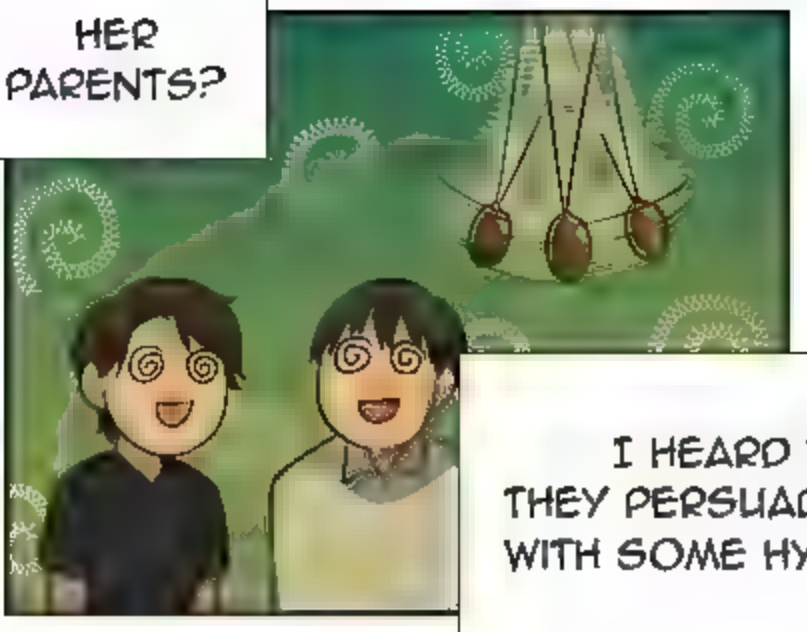
SHAKE
PREZ!

J-JIHAN?

AS SHE WAS ASLEEP AND DIDN'T REMEMBER WHAT HAD HAPPENED, I EXPLAINED THAT SHE HAD BEEN KIDNAPPED.

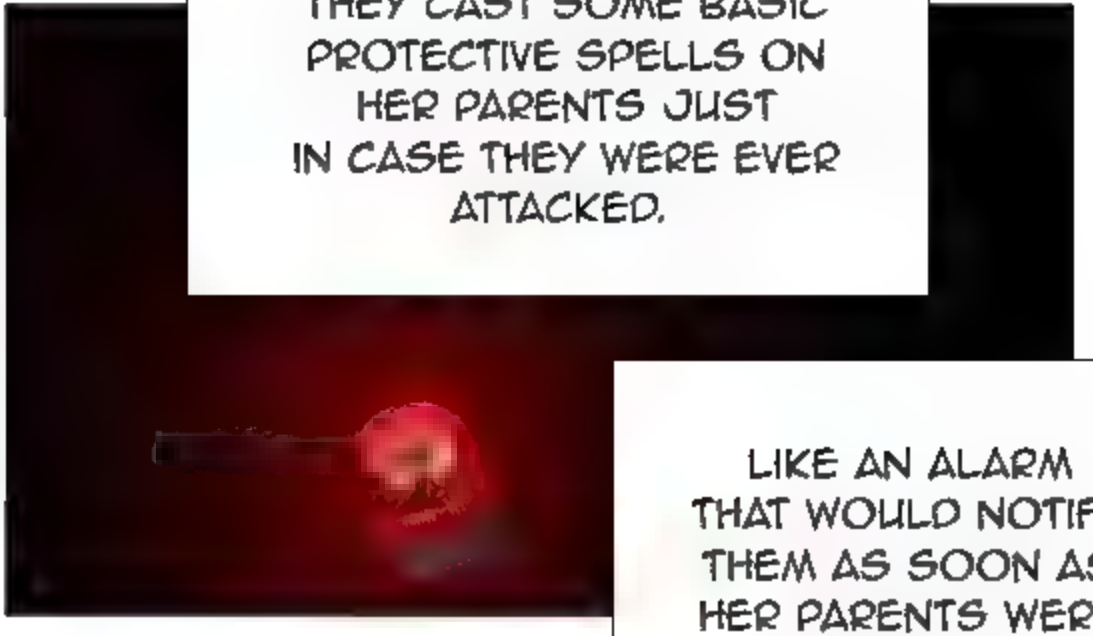

AND WE DECIDED THAT IT WOULD BE BEST FOR HER TO STAY AT CHEON BU CLAN UNTIL THINGS CALMED DOWN.

HER PARENTS?



I HEARD THAT THEY PERSUADED THEM WITH SOME HYPNOSIS.

AND THEY SAID THAT THEY CAST SOME BASIC PROTECTIVE SPELLS ON HER PARENTS JUST IN CASE THEY WERE EVER ATTACKED.

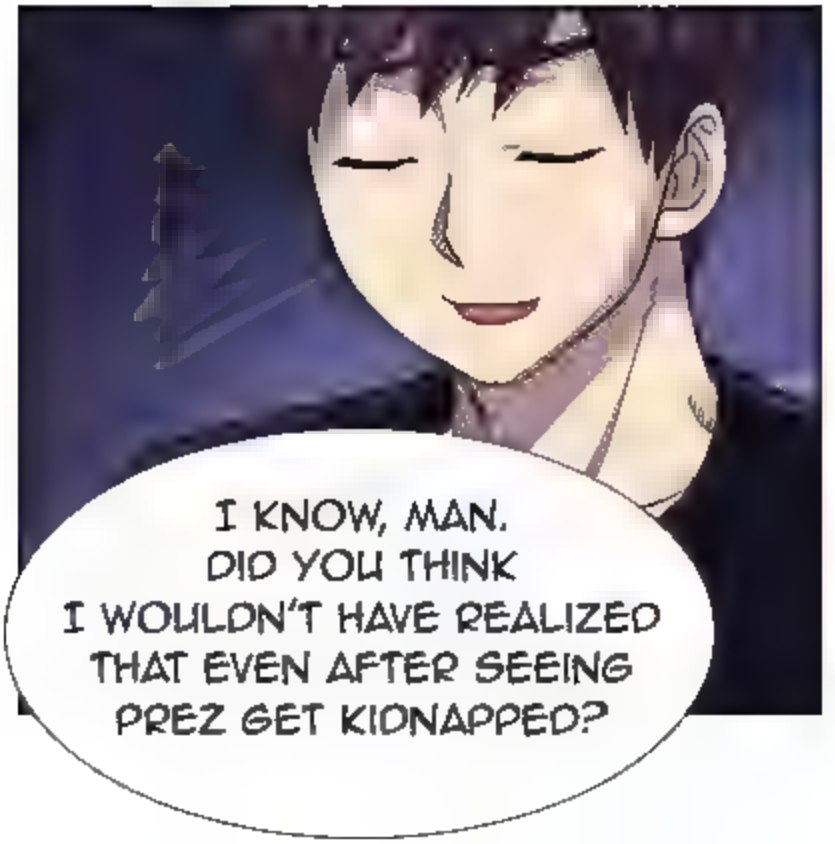


LIKE AN ALARM THAT WOULD NOTIFY THEM AS SOON AS HER PARENTS WERE IN DANGER.

AFTER THAT LONG, STORMY DAY FINALLY PASSED,
SEONIL AND I ENDED UP COMING HERE.

I REALLY DIDN'T WANT TO DO THIS... BUT YOU KNOW I HAVE NO CHOICE, RIGHT?
IT'S NOT YOUR FAULT SO YOU SHOULDN'T BLAME YOURSELF.

WHEW... STILL, AS YOUR FRIEND, I FEEL BAD HAVING TO DO THIS.
I'M TELLING YOU, THIS IS NOT A FAIRY-TALE LAND FILLED WITH HOPES AND DREAMS.


I KNOW, MAN. DID YOU THINK I WOULDN'T HAVE REALIZED THAT EVEN AFTER SEEING PREZ GET KIDNAPPED?

I SEE...

SWING
SWING

ALRIGHT.
WELL, NOW THAT
YOU'RE IN THIS DEEP,
I GUESS I CAN'T
STOP YOU.

SO.
WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO NOW?
LET'S SAY YOU STAY INVOLVED WITH THE ABYSS.
BASED ON YOUR PERSONALITY, YOU'D PROBABLY HANG AROUND THE HUNTING GROUNDS, HUH?
YEP.
YOU KNOW ME WELL.

SO YOU'LL MAKE A DUNGEON AND DIG UP ITEMS.
TO BE FAIR, CHANCES OF DISPUTES HAPPENING WILL BE NOT SO HIGH.

BUT THINGS DON'T ALWAYS GO AS YOU'D EXPECT.

YOU MEAN LIKE IF I GET RAIDED?

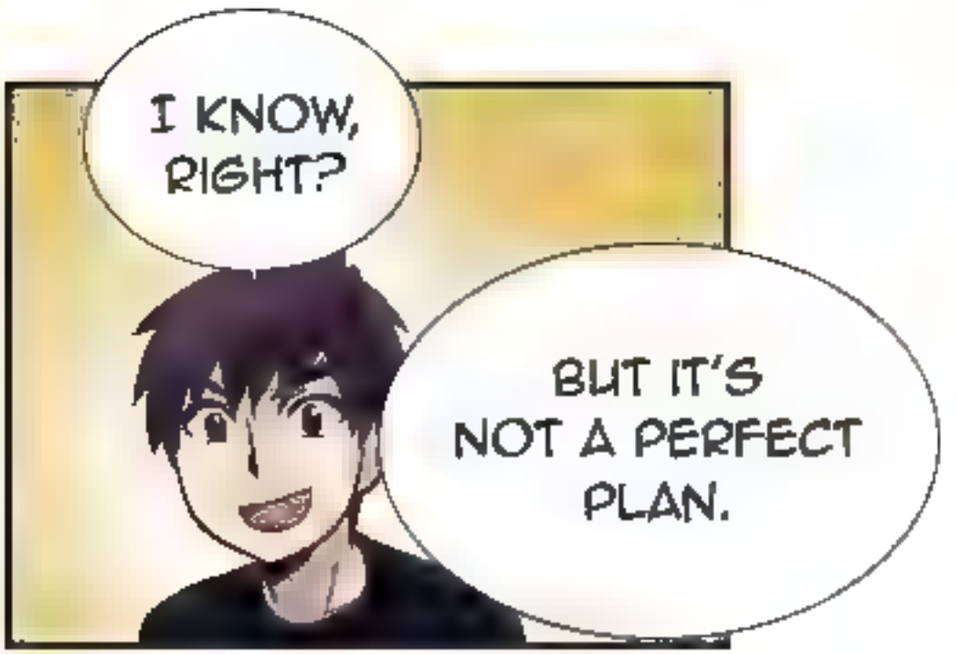
YEAH.

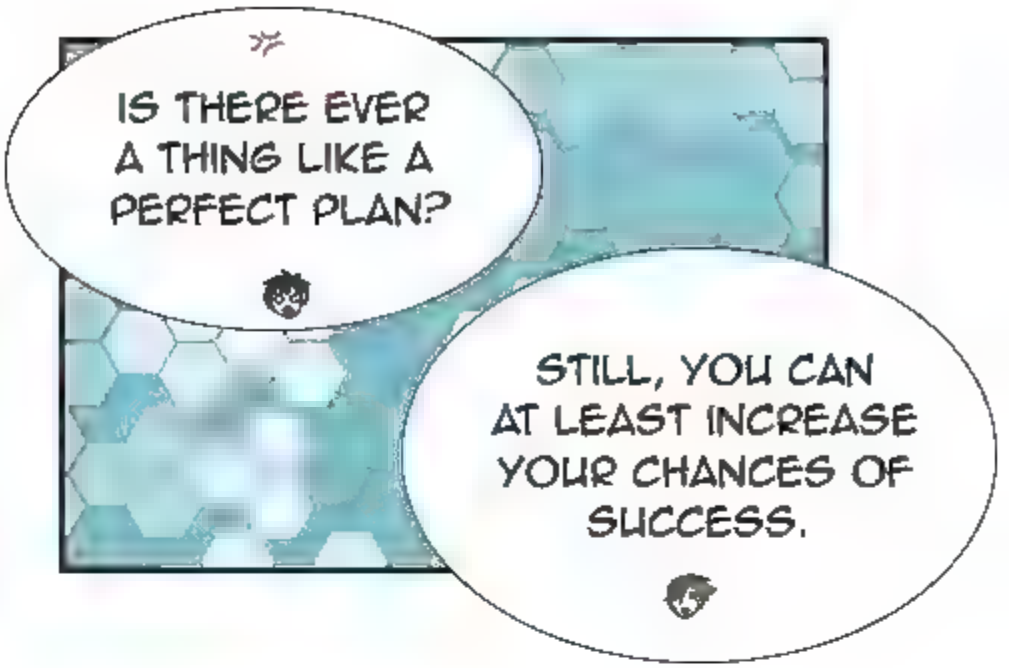
I'VE ALREADY THOUGHT OF A PLAN FOR THAT.

WHAT IS IT?

I'LL FORTIFY MY HOUSE.
I'LL USE THE MONEY I EARN TO BUY TONS OF MAGIC BOOKS,
AND TURN MY HOUSE INTO A SAFE FORTRESS.

MY MASTER ALWAYS TELLS ME THAT WIZARDS NEED TO BE PREPARED.
USING MAGIC TO FORTIFY YOUR HOUSE... THAT'S NOT BAD, ACTUALLY.


I KNOW, RIGHT?
BUT IT'S NOT A PERFECT PLAN.


IS THERE EVER A THING LIKE A PERFECT PLAN?
STILL, YOU CAN AT LEAST INCREASE YOUR CHANCES OF SUCCESS.

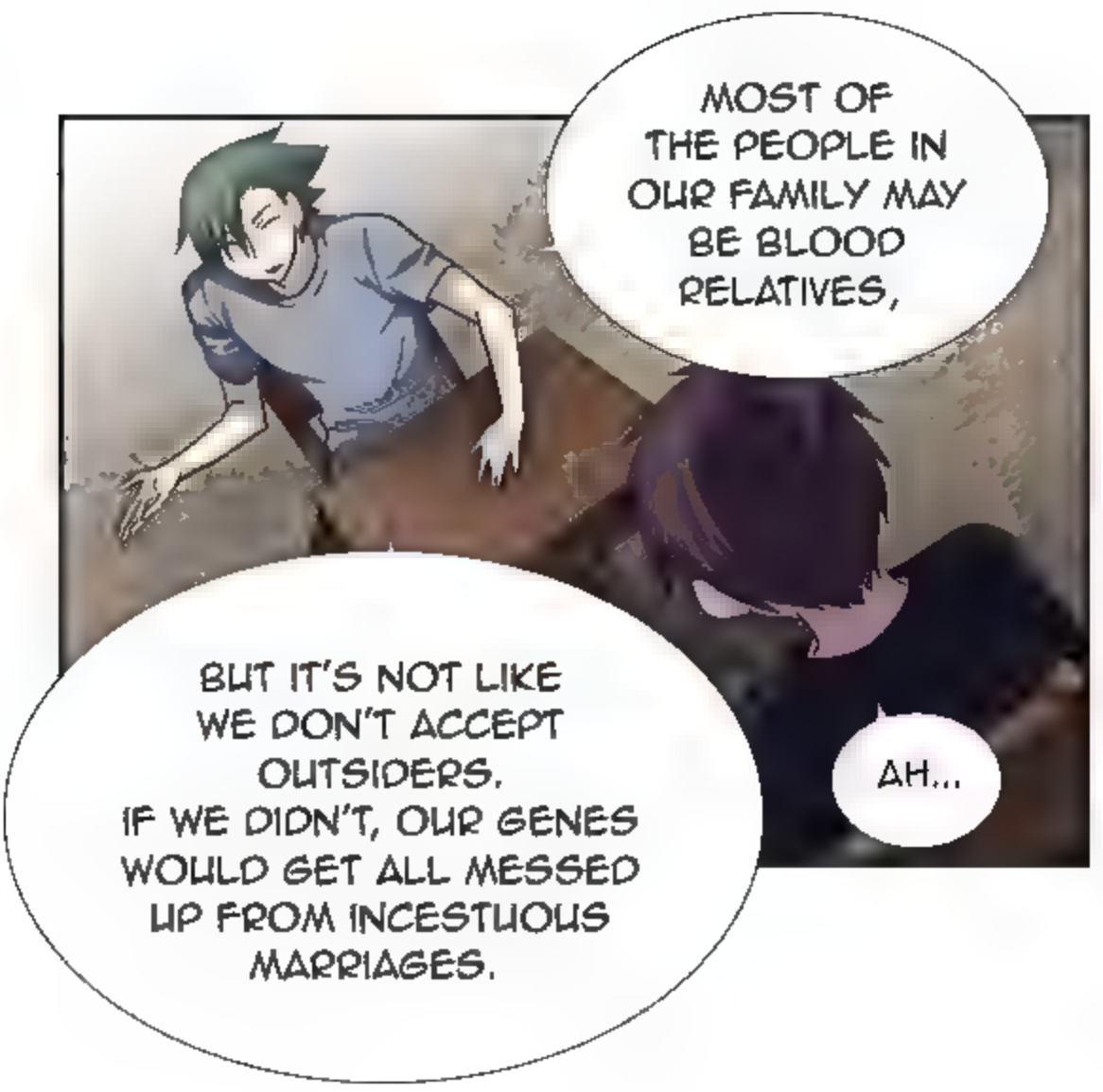
WHAT ELSE CAN I DO?

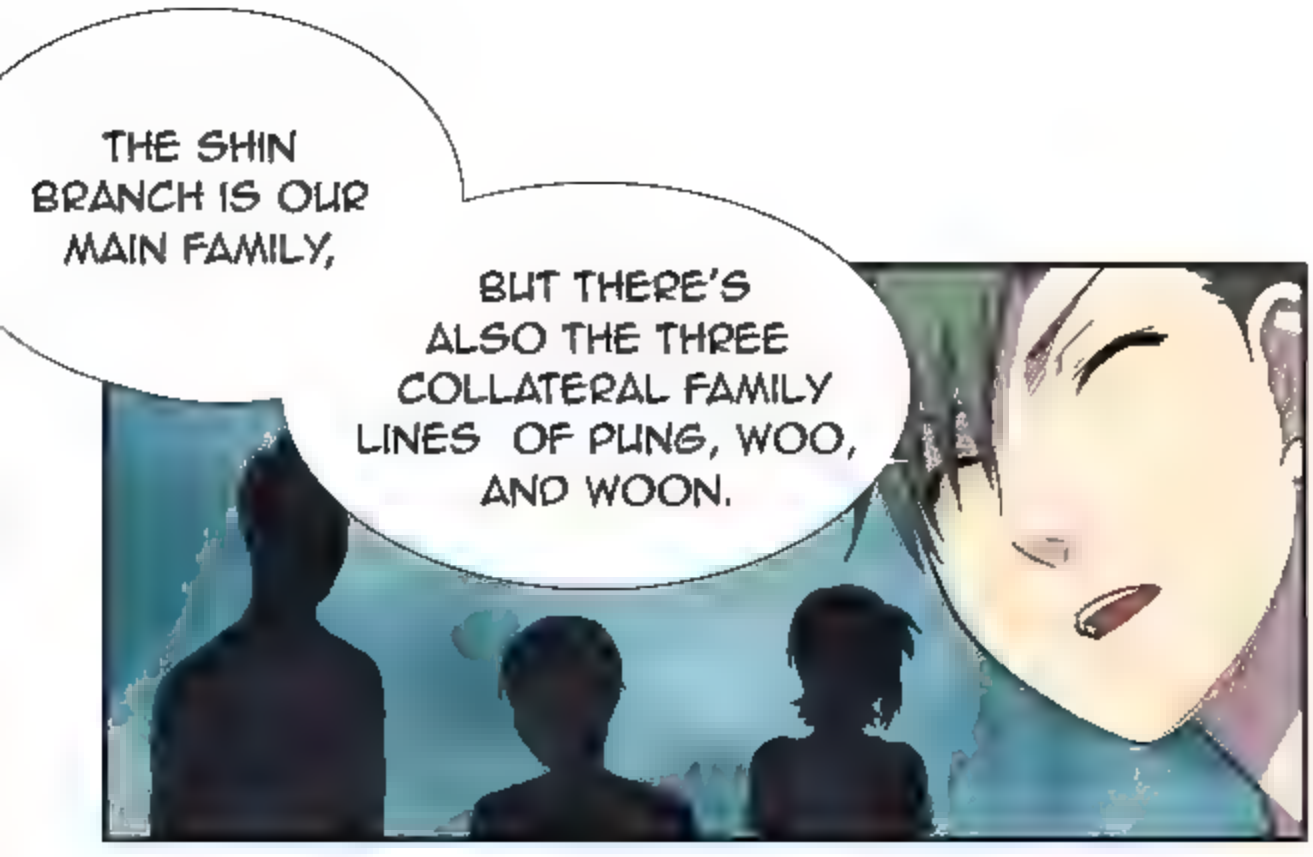
SSSK

JIHAN.
COME AND JOIN
CHEON BU CLAN.

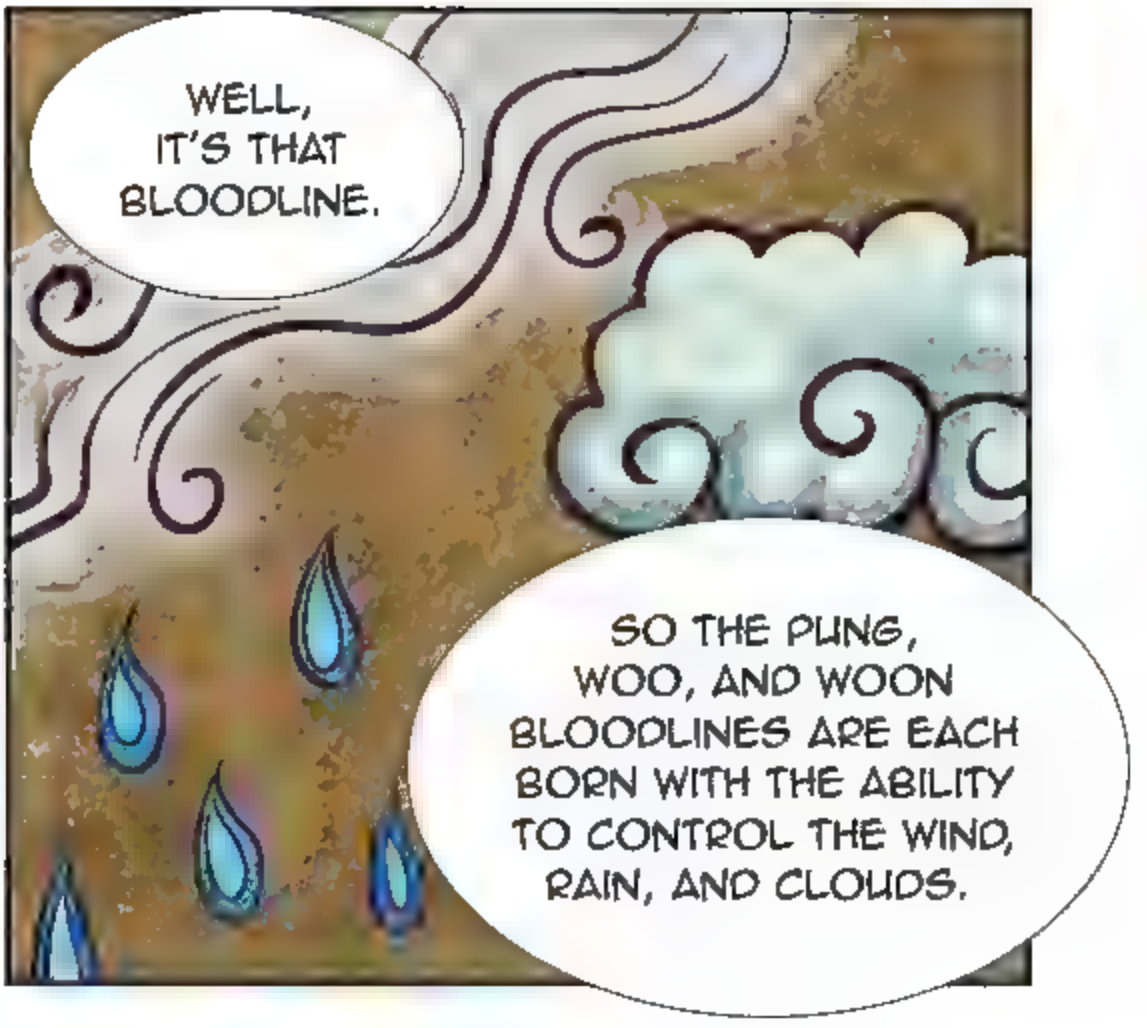
"GET IN THE
F**"
OBOT,
SHINJI!"

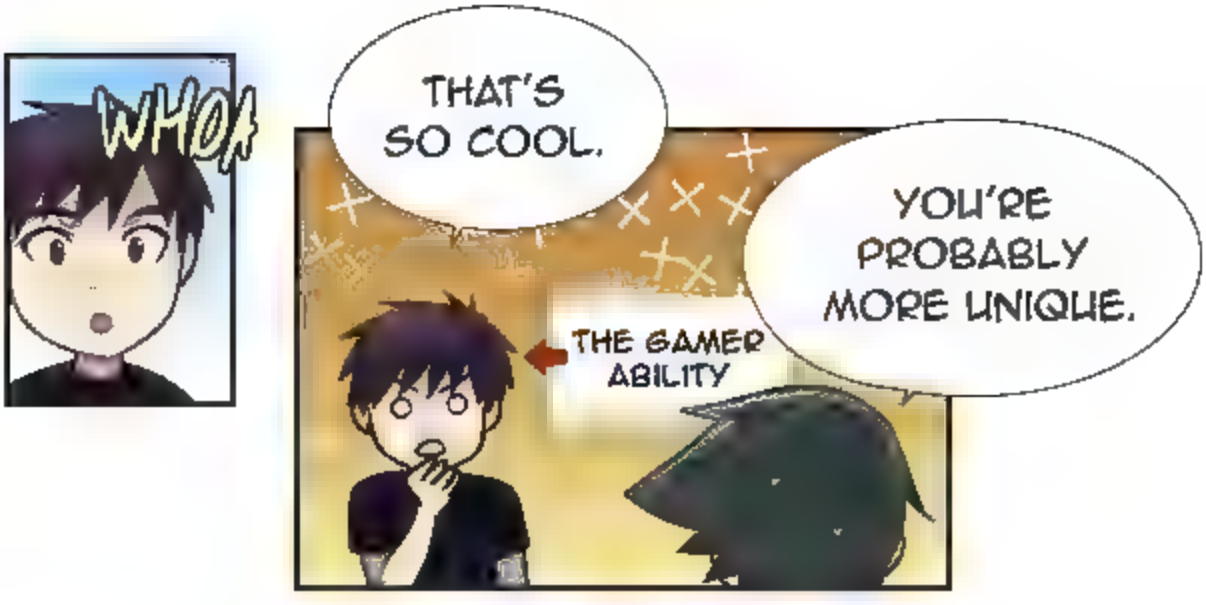
WAIT,
AM I EVEN ALLOWED TO JOIN?
OF COURSE.


MOST OF THE PEOPLE IN OUR FAMILY MAY BE BLOOD RELATIVES,
AH...
BUT IT'S NOT LIKE WE DON'T ACCEPT OUTSIDERS.
IF WE DIDN'T, OUR GENES WOULD GET ALL MESSED UP FROM INCESTUOUS MARRIAGES.


THE SHIN BRANCH IS OUR MAIN FAMILY,
BUT THERE'S ALSO THE THREE COLLATERAL FAMILY LINES OF PUNG, WOO, AND WOON.

YOU KNOW THE STORY ABOUT THE WIND, RAIN, AND CLOUD GODS, RIGHT?
YEAH, OF COURSE.
EVERY KOREAN KNOWS THE DANGUN LEGEND.


WELL, IT'S THAT BLOODLINE.
SO THE PUNG, WOO, AND WOON BLOODLINES ARE EACH BORN WITH THE ABILITY TO CONTROL THE WIND, RAIN, AND CLOUDS.


WHOA
THAT'S SO COOL.
THE GAMER ABILITY
YOU'RE PROBABLY MORE UNIQUE.

ANYWAY... IT'S STILL KIND OF NOT ENOUGH TO CALL THEM A POWERFUL FORCE.
SO WE LET SOME OUTSIDERS INTO OUR FAMILY.
WE CALL IT "OUTSOURCING."
LIKE A CONTRACT WORKER?
IT'S MORE LIKE... A FULL-TIME POSITION THAN A HIRED MERC.
WHEN YOU LOOK AT MAJOR CORPORATIONS, YOU OFTEN SEE THE FAMILY WORKING AT THE CENTER WITH AN OUTSIDER AS THE CEO, RIGHT?
IT'S LIKE THAT.
AHA....

THAT'S WHY I'M TELLING YOU TO JOIN OUR FAMILY.
I MEAN, YOU WOULD HAVE TO HELP MY FAMILY OUT WITH WORK, BUT THAT ALSO MEANS YOU WOULD HAVE OUR PROTECTION.

ARE YOU WORRIED ABOUT ME?

TAKE CARE OF MY SON.

ISN'T IT OBVIOUS?

HOW WOULD I EVER FACE YOUR MOTHER IF YOU END UP GETTING YOURSELF KILLED SOMEWHERE?

IS THAT SO...?

TOUCHED

SO HOW DO I JOIN?

FLUTTER
HERE. IT'S A CONTRACT.

UH....
HEY SEONIL.
WHAT?
IS JOINING
YOUR FAMILY
ALWAYS
LIKE THIS?

WHAT'S THE PROBLEM?

IT'S JUST, IN MOVIES AND STUFF....
THEY ALWAYS HAVE SOME KIND OF COOL CEREMONY.

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